

Standard 8-5: The student will demonstrate an understanding of major social, political, and economic developments that took place in the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century.

8-5.3 Summarize the changes that occurred in South Carolina agriculture and industry during the late nineteenth century, including changes in crop production in various regions, and the growth of the textile industry in the Upcountry. (H, G, E)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand / Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

In 3rd grade students summarized developments in industry and technology in South Carolina in the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century, including the rise of the textile industry, the expansion of the railroad, and the growth of the towns (3-5.1). They summarized the effects of the state and local laws that are commonly known as Jim Crow laws on African Americans in particular and on South Carolinians as a whole (3-5.2).

In 5th grade, students compared the economic and social effects of Reconstruction on different populations, including the move from farms to factories and the change from the plantation system to sharecropping (5-1.1). They explained the purpose and motivations behind the rise of discriminatory laws and groups and their effect on the rights and opportunities of African Americans in different regions of the United States. (5-1.2)

In United States history, students will summarize developments in business and industry, including the ascent of new industries, the rise of corporations through monopolies and corporate mergers, the role of industrial leaders such as John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie, the influence of business ideologies, and the increasing availability of consumer goods and the rising standard of living (USHC-5.1). They will summarize the factors that influenced the economic growth of the United States and its emergence as an industrial power, including the abundance of natural resources; government support and protection in the form of tariffs, labor policies, and subsidies; and the expansion of international markets associated with industrialization (USHC-5.2). They will also explain the transformation of America from an agrarian to an industrial economy, including the effects of mechanized farming, the role of American farmers in facing economic problems, and the rise of the Populist movement (USHC-5.3).

It is essential for students to know:

Changes in crop production in various regions occurred as a result of natural disaster and entrepreneurship. The hurricane that struck Charleston in 1893 and others that followed wiped out the rice fields and competition from the Far East brought an end to the production of 'Carolina Gold.' Lowcountry farmers turned to truck gardening to supply local markets. Tobacco was introduced as a cash crop to the Pee Dee but could not be grown in other parts of the Lowcountry. Some upstate farmers started planting peach trees, however cotton continued to dominate South Carolina agriculture.

This ready supply of the raw materials and a changed attitude about the development of industry led to the growth of the textile industry in the Upcountry. Prior to the Civil War and in the immediate postwar period, the planter elite looked down on the development of industry as a less noble calling than their antebellum agricultural society. However new entrepreneurial leadership became boosters of the idea of the New South. Local investors provided most of the capital for the building of textile mills, located close to the cotton fields and along rivers that would supply power. South Carolina also had a ready supply of workers. Poor farmers who could no longer make a living from the land were attracted to mill

villages that provided homes, schools, churches, and stores in addition to jobs. Most African Americans, however, purposely were not considered for traditional textile mill labor such as weaving or dying fabric. Although the first mills were started in the upstate, within 15 years there were mills in the Midlands and the Lowcountry. The boom for mill building came after 1895 due to technological innovations. Modeled after New England mills, these textile mills produced finished cloth on their many spindles. By 1910, South Carolina was the second largest textile producing state in the nation.

Life for mill workers was not ideal. The conditions in the mill village depended upon the generosity of the mill owners and the economic conditions of the times. When depression struck, workers were laid off. Although some children were able to go to school many others worked in the mill where their small fingers made them better able to retie broken threads but their youth made them more susceptible to workplace accidents. Men, women and children worked long hours for low pay and were often looked down upon as “lint heads.” Workers in South Carolina earned less than half of what mill workers in other parts of the United States earned and women and children were paid even less than men. They worked from 6 am until 6 pm until Governor Tillman’s law reduced hours to 66 per week. Workers often suffered from diseases of the lung including tuberculosis from breathing in the cotton fiber and from the crowded conditions of their workplace. Workplace accidents that could end a worker’s career were also an ever-present possibility. Workers were unable to organize to improve their lot as union organizers were immediately fired and the organized labor movement consistently crushed by the mill owners.

It is not essential for students to know

Students do not need to know details about life in the mill villages or the names of individual entrepreneurs who established them. They do not need to know about specific labor unions that attempted to organize the workers in the mills. They do not need to know about the social tensions between the middle class townspeople, who often advocated for the establishment of a mill until it became a reality and the mill workers a nuisance in their community, and the mill workers.

Assessment guidelines:

Appropriate assessments will require students to **summarize** the changes in crop production in South Carolina in the late 19th century. They should also be able to **explain** the reasons for the rise of the textile industry and the conditions of the mill workers.